

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: CURRENT MOROCCAN ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATIONS

REF: RABAT 3092

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: MY LATEST DISCUSSION WITH KING (REFTEL) AS WELL AS RECENT UPSURGE IN GUERRILLA ACTIVITY AGAINST SPAIN PROMPT ME TO OFFER FOLLOWING FURTHER ANALYSIS OF MOROCCAN ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATIONS AT PRESENT JUNCTURE. AMONG MOST SALIENT TRENDS ARE: (A) INCREASE OF MOROCCAN PRESSURE ON SPAIN, WHICH HAS SEIZED CENTER STAGE AT LEAST MOMENTARILY FROM CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALGERIA; (B) DIMINISHED BUT NOT ENTIRELY DISSIPATED MOROCCAN WILLINGNESS TO CONTEMPLATE FOUR-POWER TALKS ON SAHARA; AND (C) KING'S KEEN HOPES FOR U.S. ROLE, RELATED TO FRUSTRATION IN ATTEMPTS TO ENGAGE SPAIN DIPLOMATICALLY. THERE IS SERIOUS POTENTIAL FOR DISILLUSIONMENT IF U.S. DOES NOT BECOME MINIMALLY ACTIVE DIPLOMATICALLY. HAZINESS OF SPANISH ATTITUDES CONCERNING MOROCCO AND ALGERIA IS PARTICULARLY

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DISTURBING TO MOROCCANS, WHO DETECT SPANISH-ALGERIAN COLLUSION

AND CONTINUE PUZZLED OVER SPANISH UNINTEREST IN ATTRACTIVE DEAL THEY FEEL MOROCCO OFFERING. END SUMMARY.

2. U.S. SAHARA DIPLOMACY. KING'S EXPLANATION FOR CALLING ME TO SEE HIM LAST WEEK INVOLVED CLARIFICATION OF U.S. STATEMENT OF SAHARA NEUTRALITY ISSUED IN MADRID. IT SEEMS TO ME, HOWEVER, A PRIMARY MOTIVE WAS TO TRY TO SMOKE OUT WHICH WAY U.S. WAS TENDING WITH RESPECT TO HIS REQUEST FOR DIPLOMATIC HELP ON SAHARA. IN THIS CONNECTION, KING WAS CLEARLY INTENT ON INFORMING ME HE HAD MODIFIED HIS POSITION ON FOUR-POWER TALKS, WHILE TAKING PAINS TO LEAVE DOOR SLIGHTLY AJAR. AS NOTED REFTTEL, HE IS SHOWING PATIENCE BUT IS KEENLY HOPING WE WILL COME UP WITH SOMETHING. THE MORE FRUSTRATED HE BECOMES IN EFFORT TO ENGAGE SPAIN DIPLOMATICALLY, THE MORE HOPE HE LIKELY TO PIN ON POSSIBILITY OF OUR EASING HIS DILEMMA BY LEANING ON SPAIN. AT SAME TIME, MOROCCANS ARE SHOWING THEY WILL NOT SHRINK FROM INCREASED EMPHASIS ON GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN CONTINUING DIPLOMATIC IMPASSE. KING'S ANGER AT SPAIN (ALTHOUGH HE IS ACCOMPLISHED DRAMATIST) SEEMED GENUINE AND I AM FRANKLY DUBIOUS THAT MY ADMONITIONS AGAINST AROUSING SPANISH PRIDE THROUGH GUERRILLA ACTIVITY MADE MUCH OF AN IMPRESSION.

3. NEW PRESSURE ON SPAIN. KING'S HEIGHTENED ANGER AT SPAIN AND UPSURGE OF ANTI-SPANISH GUERRILLA ACTIVITY RAISE QUESTION AS TO WHY THERE HAS BEEN SHIFT OF ATTACK BACK TO SPANIARDS AFTER PERIOD IN WHICH ALGERIANS HAD BEEN BEARING BRUNT OF MOROCCAN WRATH. IT POSSIBLE MOROCCANS FEEL CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALGERIA HAS FULFILLED PRELIMINARY PURPOSES OF EXPOSING, AS MOROCCANS SEE IT, ALGERIAN "DUPLICITY" AND "DESIGNS" WHICH HAD BEEN VEILED BY BLAND FORMULA OF NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS. ALGERIANS PERHAPS PERCEIVED AS SUFFICIENTLY IRRITATED AND TO DO MORE AT THIS MOMENT SEEN AS POSSIBLE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

4. KING'S EXASPERATION WITH SPAIN STRIKES ME LARGELY AS RESULT OF HIS INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND SPANISH MOTIVES. FRENCH-TRAINED AND CARTESIAN IN APPROACH, HE CONVINCED OF LOGIC THAT (A) SPANISH DEPARTURE FROM AFRICA IS INEVITABLE; (B) SPAIN CAN MAKE BEST POSSIBLE DEAL FOR ITS MILITARY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS WITH MOROCCO; (C) SPAIN'S CONSERVATIVE REGIME HAS EVERY REASON TO SUPPORT CONSERVATISM IN NEIGHBORING MOROCCO RATHER THAN TO

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ENCOURAGE RADICAL ALGERIAN REGIME; (D) SELF-DETERMINATION AS A "SACRED PRINCIPLE" CANNOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AND CERTAINLY DOES NOT APPLY IN SPAIN ITSELF. IN LIGHT OF SUCH COMPELLING LOGIC, KING HAS DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING WHY SPAIN IS HUNG UP ON ABSTRACT PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR SAHARA AND WHY IT PLAYING FOOTsie WITH ALGERIA.

5. AS FOR MAURITANIANS, THEY ARE PRESENTLY EXCEEDINGLY COZY

WITH MOROCCANS -- BUT THE TWO SETS OF ARAB BROTHERS DO NOT REALLY TRUST EACH OTHER. A FONMINISTRY OFFICIAL, FOR EXAMPLE, RECENTLY EXPOUNDED TO ME THEME THAT MAURITANIANS MIGHT WELL STEP OUT OF LINE AT SOME POINT WITHOUT MUCH PRIOR NOTICE. MOROCCANS LOOK UPON MAURITANIANS WITH SAME CYNICISM AS TAMMANY BOSS WHO DEFINED HONEST POLITICIAN AS ONE WHO ONCE BOUGHT, STAYS BOUGHT. MOROCCANS EVIDENTLY FEEL CONSTANT INCENTIVES AND PRESSURES NECESSARY TO KEEP MAURITANIA ON TRACK.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. AS I PERCEIVE BROADER U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST, I BELIEVE THAT A CAREFULLY REGULATED AND APPORTIONED COUNTERWEIGHT (IN MOROCCO AND ELSEWHERE) TO ALGERIAN RAMBUNCTIOUSNESS AND HABITUAL OPPOSITION TO OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES IS CAPABLE OF SERVING OUR OVERALL NATIONAL INTEREST. I IMAGINE THAT THIS WILL BE A FACTOR IN EXAMINATION (STATE 143402) OF WHETHER THE U.S. SHOULD PLAY A ROLE IN SAHARA DISPUTE AND WHAT IT SHOULD BE. I HAVE ALREADY ADDRESSED MYSELF TO QUESTION OF FOUR-POWER TALKS IN RABAT 2949. IN THIS PROCESS WE WOULD ALL UNDOUBTEDLY SEE MUCH MORE CLEARLY IF WE COULD FIND OUT JUST WHAT SPAIN'S CURRENT THINKING AND OBJECTIVES ARE. THERE IS SERIOUS POTENTIAL FOR MOROCCAN DISILLUSIONMENT IF U.S. IS NOT MINIMALLY ACTIVE DIPLOMATICALLY IN VIEW OF KING'S REQUEST. FACT-FINDING EFFORTS WITH MUDRID, ESPECIALLY IF WE COULD SHARE SOME OF RESULTS WITH GOM, MIGHT BE ONE WAY OF DEMONSTRATING A WILLINGNESS TO BE HELPFUL AND OF ENCOURAGING MOROCCO TO PERSIST IN A DIPLOMATIC APPROACH TO PROBLEM, WITHOUT NECESSARILY COMMITTING OURSELVES TO ANY SPECIFIC POSITION.
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